

D/R FBIS
W. C. C. C.

FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

P. O. Box 2604

Washington, D. C. 20013

MQ-5061
7 June 1985

STAT



Chief

Nicosia Bureau, FBIS

Dear Chuck:

Subject: Communications With Headquarters

This may be an unnecessary letter as I assume you have by now reached the inevitable conclusion that your methods of communicating with Headquarters are causing more problems than they solve. But perhaps a little further explanation may make it even more clear.

The communications system that we have used for umpteen years, both unclassified and classified, involves a format which we generally refer to as "unclassified admins" and "cables." I needn't describe them to you. The distribution of these messages is set up so that communications from bureau chiefs will get distribution to those persons concerned. Use of these formats also means that we in the front office get a drop copy so that we can intervene with the appropriate officers if we see that some policy issue is involved or that some action is violating office-level planning. Group chiefs similarly become informed even if they are not the action officers. This brings all appropriate people into the picture and, if all goes as it should, provides for a coherent decision and response to the bureau chief.

Service messages (which originally were for use only on communications aspects) are useful in a limited way for obtaining some specific, minor piece of information. But service messages should never be used on any matter that bears at all on policy. For example, recently you sent me an "Only Director" service message which is the first time in history, to my knowledge, this has been done. It would have been perfectly acceptable to send me an admin message. Also, on EYES ONLY classified cables from the bureau chief to me, I am the only one to receive the cable, and determine the distribution. This protects you on anything you might consider of a confidential nature. There are established sets of distribution for other admin messages and cables. So the channels are there; it is simply a matter of using them.

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Telephone calls are another matter. It is difficult to provide you with a considered response on the phone. Not only is there the matter of security, but the matter of coordinating a response. For example, you called me on the [Redacted] situation and I gave you an off the cuff response. Unfortunately I didn't know at that point that [Redacted] had already met the day before with others involved in this problem and that the answer was being coordinated. I tried to call you back but you had left the office. Thus, although I do not object to simple phone calls, a classified cable would have been better handled here, and the response would have been more satisfactory to you.

I sometimes think that you use service messages and phone calls to avoid people thinking that you are asking silly questions. I guarantee no one would think that. But your methods of communicating do make communication difficult, and in the long run hurt your attempts to get things done.

I agree that many Headquarters officers are not doing a good enough job in keeping "ticklers" and other records on requests from the field, and not responding quick enough with interim answers. But that's our problem here. We'll work on it. Meanwhile, please use conventional communications. The months to come will be complicated, with building of the new bureau, talks over ROSET and INTERNET, etc. Everyone needs to be kept informed.

Sincerely,

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[Redacted]

Director

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